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The Society of American Fight Directors

12-2008

The Cutting Edge, November/December 2008, Vol. 18 Issue 6

The Society of American Fight Directors

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Recommended Citation

The Society of American Fight Directors, "The Cutting Edge, November/December 2008, Vol. 18 Issue 6" (2008). *The Cutting Edge*. 87.
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The Cutting Edge



Transition of *The Cutting Edge* What to Expect from the New Electronic Format

The time is fast approaching for *The Cutting Edge* to transition from hard copy to electronic form. Your next issue will be the first completely electronic issue, so to ensure that the transition goes smoothly, we want to fill you in on what to expect, steps you will need to follow, and who to contact with any problems that may arise. In addition to this information we have also sent you a "test email" for this issue.

This "test email" was sent to the email address you have listed with the SAFD. We realize that many members utilize university, college, and company emails that have SPAM filters to deflect mass emails like this. It is also possible that the email on file is not the best email to use to deliver *The Cutting Edge* in a timely fashion. The email may also be out-

Email will be the only way that we communicate that the current issue is ready for viewing.

dated or contain a spelling error that prohibits us from reaching you. This is our main reason for

sending the November/December issue to you using both formats. If the email comes through, you have nothing to do but sit back and enjoy this issue with the confidence that the next issue will be delivered the same way. If, however, you receive the hard copy issue without having received an email we want to hear from you. After this issue, email will be the only way that we communicate a current issue is ready for viewing and/or printing. All issues will be available on the website, but our goal is to make your awareness and retrieval of it more efficient.

What To Expect

Beginning in January 2009 *The Cutting Edge* will be posted on the website for you to view, download, and print. In addition to utilizing a more efficient form of delivery, we have also improved the image of *The Cutting Edge* by including color photography and images. We hope that this will increase our abilities to bring you the latest information and most detailed reporting possible.

An email will be sent to the email address you have on file with the Society of American Fight Directors. This email will contain a brief description of the material contained in the issue and links to a screen friendly pdf. version (lower resolution = more

efficient viewing) and printable pdf. version (higher resolution = greater clarity). These emails will be short and to the point, so as not to take up valuable space in your inbox or bog you down with too much information. Essentially, the email will let you know that the issue is ready and waiting for you to review as your schedule allows.

Steps To Follow

There are only two steps to follow in order to receive your new, electronic version of *The Cutting Edge*.

1. If you did not receive the "test email," please check your SPAM folder, add our email address to your list of acceptable emails, and/or contact us with your correct email address. You should also contact us if there is a more preferred email you wish us to use.
2. Once you receive the email use the links provided or go to the website to choose which version (screen friendly or printable) you wish to use.

Who To Contact With Problems

If you don't receive the "test email" or subsequent emails; have problems with downloading, viewing, or printing; or have questions please email *The Cutting Edge* Editor-In-Chief, Michael Mueller, at cuttingedge@safd.org or mjmueller3@aol.com.

Our goal is to make this new version of *The Cutting Edge* work for you. In order to do this, we will need your feed-

back, support, and patience. Let us know how we can improve. By combining our efforts, all our work will serve to improve the overall communication within our organization.

Our goal is to make this new version of *The Cutting Edge* work for you.



The pen is mightier than the sword ...

Michael Mueller, Editor-in-Chief

With this last issue of 2008 we mark the end of an era. *The Cutting Edge* has been printed and sent to the membership through the postal service since January of 1990; not a long time by many publication's standards, but significant for this organization. This issue will be the last printed issue sent to the members of the SAFD and I find myself feeling the effects of this bittersweet moment. Advancing forward with technology is both very exciting and necessary for us to stay true to our title, but even with all the advantages of the transition, the loss must not be ignored.

Personally, I have always enjoyed receiving mail, not email, but real mail from a physical mailbox not a cyber interpretation. Perhaps I'm old fashioned in this sense, but there is something exciting about receiving mail. I like the feel of it, the idea that people have worked to ensure that I received it, and the peaceful reassurance that something I intend to read won't disappear if the power goes out. I'm sure there are a few of you who feel the same way, but we also understand the absolute certainty and need for change.

Times have changed since the first issue was sent out. Though the Presidents of the United States in 1990 and 2008 were both named George Bush, many economic areas have changed. In 1990, the price of a gallon of gas was \$1.16, a first class stamp was \$.25, and the federal debt was \$3.2 trillion. Today, gas per gallon hovers from \$3.70 to \$4.00, a first class stamp is \$.42, and the federal debt is around \$9.7 trillion. Within the span of 18 years the growth of our country has had an exponential effect on our economy. The SAFD is no different, and we would be blind to think that it is.

This publication is the lifeline of information for the SAFD. Since 1990 there are exponentially more workshops to report on, more training opportunities to share, and a greater number of members to report on their activities. With this increase comes the need for more efficient methods of communication. *The Cutting Edge* has continued to grow as a result of the efforts put forth by the members who have taken the time and effort to contribute to the overall communication within the SAFD. The new, electronic format will provide the basis for continued growth while enabling the necessary expansion needed from our organization's growth.

It is this growth and expansion that excites me as we head into the New Year, but it is also my appreciation for the printed word that drove me to support the printable files availability on the website. To me it really is the best of both worlds. *The Cutting Edge* is positioning itself to reclaim the timeliness it has lost and provide a foundation for growth in the many years to come, but through a means that maintains the value of the printed word. I'll miss receiving *The Cutting Edge* in my physical mailbox, but I look forward to the wealth of information, delivered in a timely fashion, that I will be able to print out and enjoy at the pace I always have.

Michael Mueller

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Mission Statement of The Cutting Edge:

The Cutting Edge, a bimonthly newsletter written exclusively by and for the membership of the Society of American Fight Directors (**SAFD**), provides its readers with resources to stay informed, involved and always on *The Cutting Edge* of stage combat.

Our publication aims to:

- Keep the membership informed about SAFD events, policies, opportunities, membership activities and useful industry information
- Provide the membership with a forum for open discourse
- Welcome new members and engage current members

Cutting Edge Submission Deadlines:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Material Due Dates</u>
January/February 2009:	November 1, 2008
March/April 2009:	January 1, 2009
May/June 2009:	March 1, 2009
July/August 2009:	May 1, 2009
November/December 2009:	July 1, 2009
November/December 2009:	September 1, 2009

Regional Report Deadlines:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Reports Due to Regional Reps</u>
January/February 2009:	October 15, 2008
March/April 2009:	December 15, 2008
May/June 2009:	February 15, 2009
July/August 2009:	April 15, 2009
November/December 2009:	June 15, 2009
November/December 2009:	August 15, 2009

SAFD

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Associate Editor-Regional Reports:	Darrell Rushton
Advisor:	John Tovar

Send all submissions, comments and questions to
cuttingedge@safd.org

Call for Applications

SAFD Regional Representatives – ALL REGIONS

The Society of American Fight Directors Regional Representative Coordinator is seeking applicants interested in serving as Regional Representative for their region. Regional Representative applications are currently being sought for ALL TEN REGIONS.

1. **East Central:** New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, District of Columbia
2. **Great Lakes:** Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois
3. **International:** All members outside of the USA
4. **Mid-America:** Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas
5. **New England:** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island
6. **Northwest:** Oregon, Washington, Alaska
7. **Pacific West:** California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada
8. **Rocky Mountain:** Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah
9. **Southeast:** Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina
10. **Southwest:** Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico

This is a volunteer position responsible for working with the Regional Representative Coordinator, in cooperation with the SAFD Executive Committee.

Responsible for the following duties:

- Maintain a working knowledge of the current Policies of the SAFD.
- Make initial contact with each regional member
- Be available for answering questions concerning the art form and the Society.
- Keep local membership up to date with the growth and development of the SAFD, including nominations and elections, proposed policy changes, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Submit a report to both the Chair and the Editor of *The Cutting Edge* for publication in the "Regional Roundup" on a monthly basis.
- Hold at least one (1) regional informational meeting per year where all regional members are invited.
- Attend one (1) yearly committee meeting at the Fight Director Workshop and Conference or have a surrogate present a written annual report.

In return for services, the SAFD will

- Waive dues for each Representative while they hold office.
- Print each Regional Representative's name and contact information in the "Fight Master" and on the official SAFD web page
- Deliver a second copy of all SAFD publications to the Regional Representative. This includes, but is not limited to, the "Fight Master," SAFD workshop posters, and brochures.
- Deliver an updated list of all SAFD members in an assigned region at least once per year.
- Permit any Regional Representative, regardless of rank, to attend the workshops held at the Fight Director Workshop and Conference.
- Provide an annual operating budget of \$1.00 for each member in good standing situated within his or her region. No regional budget is to exceed \$100.00.

Qualified applicants should meet the following requirements:

- *A member in good standing for at least three years with the SAFD*
- *Reside in the region applied for*
- *Detail oriented with excellent communication skills*
- *Reliable access to the internet*

This position will be effective as of January 1, 2009 and last for a minimum of three years. At the conclusion of the three-year term the option to renew for another term will be provided. Please submit a letter of intent, updated CV, and contact information for three references via email (rbrown@lonmorris.edu) or post (below) by December 15, 2008.

SAFD Regional Rep Coordinator
H. Russ Brown
408 Amanda Court
Whitehouse, TX 75791

Applicants will be contacted and interviewed individually thereafter. We hope you'll join us and help serve the SAFD!



CT Lee Soroko ...In the Footlight

If you are interested in being featured or to nominate another member, please contact Editor-in-Chief Michael Mueller (mjmueller3@aol.com).

CT Lee Soroko is the SAFD's newly elected Treasurer. CT Soroko currently teaches at the University of Miami. He has also taught at Savannah College of Art and Design, Yale University, and New York University. His acting and directing credits include productions with the Atlantic Theatre Company (Off-Broadway), Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Long Wharf Theatre. As a Fight Director, his professional credits include productions at the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival (LORT), Savannah Shakespeare Festival (LOA), and Triad Stage (LOA). Associate Editor Marcus D. Gregio recently talked to CT Soroko for *The Cutting Edge*.

MDG: How did you first hear about the Society of American Fight Directors?

LS: I had heard about the SAFD in graduate school, but [after I graduated] I was cast in a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at Actors Theatre of Louisville that was directed by Jon Jory. FM J. Allen Suddeth was the Fight Director and FM Drew Fracher was the Fight Captain.

MDG: What prompted you to become a member?

LS: Eight years [after working on that production of *Romeo and Juliet*], I was teaching Movement, Acting, Voice, Dramatic Literature, and Theatre History (oi!) in a small liberal arts college in North Carolina. The chair wanted me to teach stage combat, but I did not want to do that without getting some more training. So I went to the website and went to the ACW in Vegas. By chance it was also a TTW year. I remember having the Maestro for R&D (assisted by CT Paulie Steger), FM Wooley for Unarmed (assisted by CT James Brown) and FM Brian Byrnes (assisted by FM k. Jenny Jones) for Broad-sword. Of course the Emperor and Chuck were keeping everyone in line. By weapons night I was hooked and joined our little cult.

MDG: Now that you are a member of the Governing Body of this "little cult", what do you think is the biggest problem that the SAFD faces?

LS: Complacency. We are the choir, and we need to do as good or better than our predecessors did of getting the word out. After all, we joined and we stayed. Sadly, after three years, the ranks of the SAFD (our base) are virtually new again. We need to retain our old members and do a better job of recruiting new ones.

MDG: How will you accomplish that?

LS: Rolling out our new website will help, but it will not be a

one stop fix-it panacea. For that we need to really press the flesh as to having talking points for our members to the specific benefits of attending such focused training opportunities as the Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Actor Workshops. Over the last few years, the number of attendees of these workshops have steadily diminished. If we are going to make our workshops run at cost, we need more attendees.

MDG: How can that increase in participation be achieved?

LS: We all need to wave the flag more. The abundance of CT teaching at colleges and universities, or the large number of regional workshops, should not diminish our push to grow our ranks. The CTs in every state need to go to the theatre conferences that their state holds as part of its audition procedures for high schools and colleges. Hold a workshop, pass out flyers, give a way a "free SAFD t-shirt" (I have to run that [by the GB]), and get folks talking about going to the SSC and ACW. In this way, we promote who we are and what we do in the very way in which we do things best.

MDG: What has been your greatest stage combat inspiration?

LS: I am truly inspired by the giving nature and camaraderie that entering into the world of stage combat brings out in people.

MDG: What is your favorite weapon and why?

LS: I tend to fall in love with the weapon from the class I've just taken (like Romeo before Rosalind, going from lady to lady). The weapons just keep revealing themselves to me and I hope that I as I continue to mature as a teacher and choreographer, I'll keep broadening my color palate.

MDG: When working on a scene, what elements do you consider paramount in a partner?

LS: Trust. It all has to start there.

MDG: What advice would you give to someone just becoming interested in the SAFD?

LS: Join! Join now and learn from everyone. Start with the National Workshop and keep up your skills at the Regionals. If you wait, your skills will quickly rusticate, so train as often as you can at our various workshops.

MDG: What is in your pockets right now?

LS: I've got kids and live in Miami. My pockets are very empty.



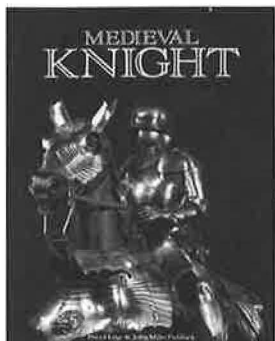
Sword and Shield Resources

By Michael Mueller

The Cutting Edge is proud to present the second installment of our section on Sword and Shield reference material. Special thanks to Friend Allan Johnson, CT Brian LeTraunik, CT Darrell Rushton, FM J. Allen Suddeth, and CT John Tovar for their input on this section.

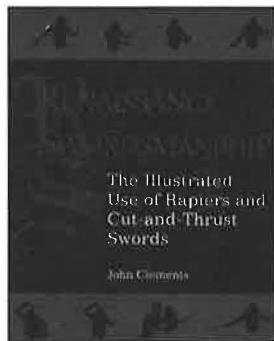
The information provided is categorized into the various disciplines the SAFD recognizes and operates on a rolling submission basis. These lists consist of books that have been found to be extremely helpful, films that give examples of well choreographed/acted fights and serve as positive instruction, as well as any other material that instructors deem crucial to those who are interested in either increasing their skill level or merely their library of reference material. Please let us know your thoughts. What should be added to our list? Why? What should not be on the list and why? Please email comments, suggestions and thoughts to Michael Mueller at cuttingedge@safd.org.

Books



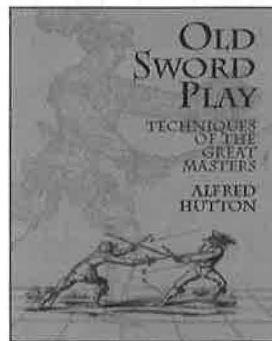
ISBN-10: 0517103192
ISBN-13: 978-0517103197

Arms & Armor of the Medieval Knight: An Illustrated History of Weaponry in the Middle Ages
by David Edge
and John Miles Paddock



ISBN-10: 0873649192
ISBN-13: 978-0873649193

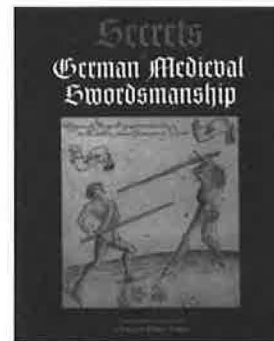
Renaissance Swordsmanship The Illustrated Book of Rapiers And Cut And Thrust Swords And Their Use
by John Clements



ISBN-10: 0486419517

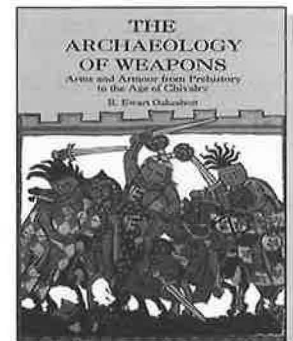
Old Sword Play: Techniques of the Great Masters
by Alfred Hutton

"I used this extensively during my TTW, as it has superb plates on transitional and smallsword, however, there's an excellent chapter on Broadsword and Buckler."
CT Darrell Rushton



ISBN-10: 1891448072
ISBN-13: 978-1891448072

Secrets of German Medieval Swordsmanship: Sigmund Ringeck's Commentaries on Liechtenauer's Verses
by Christian Henry Tobler (Editor, Translator)



ISBN-10: 0486292886

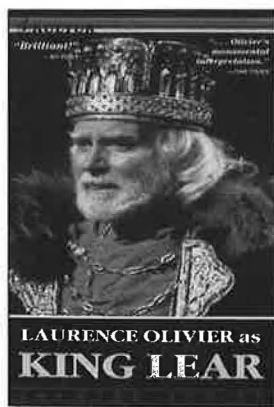
The Archaeology of Weapons: Arms and Armour from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry
by R. Ewart Oakeshott

Film/TV



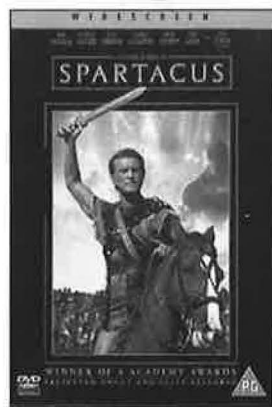
Ivanhoe (1952)

"[This film is] not entirely sword and shield, but [it has] one of the most affecting joust followed by a ground fights ever filmed. Sword and shield elements are featured in the ground fight. Great film coverage."
FM J. Allen Suddeth



King Lear

"There is a great sword and shield fight between Edmund and Edgar, choreographed by William Hobbs."
CT Brian LeTraunik

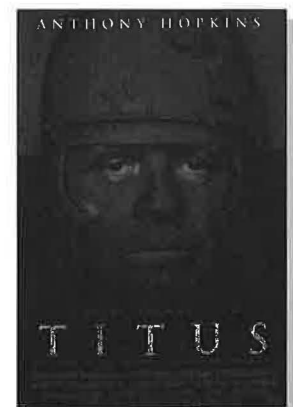


Spartacus



The Black Shield of Falworth

"[This film illustrates] great axe and shield vs mace and shield."
Ian Rose



Titus

"Julie Taymor features some excellent stylized work with Sword and Shield [in this film]."
CT Darrell Rushton



Fighting the Elements

(Determining the Best Scenes for Skills Proficiency Tests)

By T. Fulton Burns

In the last edition of *The Cutting Edge* I provided tips for locating fight-specific scenes. Now let's narrow our search from the vast quantity of scenes to a playing field of only the best quality. For a Skills Proficiency Test (SPT), choreography comes first to ensure that the proper techniques are included within the fight. Following these lessons in technique and choreography, the scene selection process begins. In a traditional acting class, the scene selection occurs first and is followed by the explored action. So even though the cart may be before the horse, as it were, with an SPT, it doesn't mean that it won't help in actor training. In fact, a result of dealing with different kinds of training obstacles could be a great tool in providing new opportunities for growth for an actor. Still, there are frustrations that must be overcome in reversing the order. The best way to reduce this frustration is to locate strong scenes for acting. After all, we are working towards the title of Actor/Combatant. When choosing a fight scene for a skills test consider the following to ensure that your work will have the necessary elements to excel as both an Actor and Combatant. *Acting One* by Robert Cohen is a great starting point that provides solid baseline criteria for selecting acting scenes. In order to help with the improvement of our acting techniques, keep the following in mind:

- Choose a role of your own sex and close to your own age.
- Choose a role in which you can clearly see something at stake emotionally for the character you will be playing.
- Choose a role in which something is happening in the scene itself – as opposed to a role in which characters are talking about something that already happened.
- Choose a role in which you can identify with the character's struggle or dilemma.
- Choose a role in which the characters and situation interest you personally. (Cohen 68)

This book reiterates much of what is taught by other acting instructors. Texts with similar lists are *Acting: In Person and In Style* by Crawford and *Acting: The Creative Process* by Albright & Albright; however, since there are differences in our training that go beyond what is needed for a traditional acting scene, it is also important to identify these elements. The following elements echo the ideas listed by Cohen with more specific details to help bridge the gap between the Actor and the Combatant.

1. Start to Finish & Everything in Between

A scene should possess a definitive beginning, middle, and end. Remember, this is a mini-story that you are telling. It is a slice right out of the play, and the structure of the scene should reflect as much. You want to keep the attention upon your overall performance. If you are only interesting because of the fighting, then you have failed your audience! Or worse - a prop may have upstaged you! So think in terms of the Well-Made-Play format and look at your scene. If there is no background, inciting incident, rise in action, climax, fall in action and conclusion, then chances are strong that the scene you are considering will not serve you well for the SPT. If the mini-story is clear, then chances are greater that it will work well for your needs. The piece must ultimately hook in the beginning and then deliver at the end.

2. Make Those Connections

I can still hear Mark Olsen telling me at the Celebration Barn: "in the theatre it is important to act *on* the line and not *between* them." He was (and is) right: it holds true for stage combat as well as acting because combat is a continuation of verbal conflict. A sign of a good scene is that it will allow for immediate connections between dialogue and action. For instance, a good scene choice may begin with dialogue, contain stage combat in the middle, and ultimately end with a short bit of dialogue. Another scenario could have quick dialogue with several direct links between combative phrases and verbal banter leading to a strong conclusion. So take a good look at the scene. Much like a conventional scene calls for a breakdown of beats, you can do the same thing with a scene calling for stage violence. In addition to verbs/actions and intentions, you need to place the appropriate phrases/moves for your skills test. Once this is accomplished many fight scenes fall right into place.

Try to avoid scenes without connections between dialogue and action or overlapping the two. Take for instance the scene between Cyrano and Valvert from *Cyrano De Bergerac*. This is a wonderful scene that is extremely exciting during performance, but there are no breaks between the dialogue and the violence. The two go hand in hand in front of the audience; but the dialogue and action happen simultaneously. This overlapping of words and actions presents the kind of scene that could cause problems for passing a skills test because the student has to perform the choreography while speaking. Dividing their focus during a test lays additional pressure that is otherwise unnecessary.

3. Are They Angry?!?

There should be conflict, Conflict, CONFLICT! We've heard it again and again: plays are not written about the day that nothing happened. On this particular day and time a fight is breaking out and it should be the greatest conflict that can be found. Violence occurs when words have failed. The words must lead and build to that failure, but the conflict will continue throughout the fight scene to ultimately reach its climactic conclusion. It is also important to keep in mind that the stakes are high! So high, in fact, that death may come to one or more involved in the scene. Identify the conflict the same way you would determine the super-objective for a character or a theme for the play.

4. Mano~e~Mano

Think of the classic western movie scene: It is sundown (or sunup) and two gunslingers are poised at opposite ends of the street waiting for the first one to move. But who are they? Are they two villains? Is it the town sheriff and a bandit?

The important factor here is to locate strong opposing characters in the story. The stronger the characters, the more dynamic the conflict will be; and the more dynamic the conflict, the better the story's beginning, middle and ultimate ending will be illustrated. Strong characters will have a history, even if that history is established only a few seconds before their weapons are drawn. These characters will have skill levels to take into account as well; skill levels that will be apparent from information preceding the scene, throughout the scene, and after the fight has been concluded. Finally, there are the character's ideas and viewpoints to contend with. Utilizing all these elements of character development will result in a much stronger scene.

These have proven to be universal issues addressed by instructors throughout the SAFD when selecting a fight scene for a skills test. Combine the ideas of both a traditional acting scene based on elements similar to Cohen's with the needs for an SPT scene and you are sure to improve your acting choices along with your combat skills. If there is ever any question, you should consult your Certified Fight Teacher and discuss the scene you have chosen. They are always there to help.

Special thanks to the following people for their contributions for this article: Lacy Altwine, Jason Armit, Matthew Ellis, Bill Lengfelder, Brian LeTraunik, Darrell Rushton, and Ted Sharon.

Cohen, Robert. *Acting One Fifth Edition*. New York. McGraw Hill Publishing, Inc. 2008

Fight Scene Selection – Q & A

Through my interaction with a number of Fight Directors and Certified Teachers for this article, there were some ideas that I felt were worth noting. Since opinions differ from test to test it's always a good idea to begin with the fight instructor preparing you for your skills test. For now these ideas are combined with a few common questions:

How long should a scene be?

It is very important to remember that the length of the entire Skills Proficiency Test should not exceed three minutes. But to keep on track for this time frame it is a good idea to "keep it short by avoiding a scene that contains a page and a half of dialogue before the fight...so get into the scene." - FD Jason Armit

CT Ted Sharon says, "the length is usually no more than one page of typed text. More than that gets too far from the point." If you are unable to achieve the length men-

tioned by Ted, then a good idea is to edit a strong scene to a workable length in order to manage the length while maintaining the core structure.

Do the weapons for my skills test matter if they are not listed in the scene?

"The feel of the scene should match the feel of the weapon being tested. Doing *Macbeth* with smallswords, while an interesting choice, may not be the best. Likewise, doing sword and shield with a Restoration comedy scene does not help to sell the intent of the weapon." - CT Brian LeTraunik

Another perspective on the issue comes from CT Darrell Rushton who says "I like to make unconventional pairings of weapons with scenes . . . the best advice I ever received for this was [from] JP Scheidler [who] advised me to do Broadsword with Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* (the spaghetti throwing scene). I stalked onstage with two broadswords to the lines 'THIS is how I solve MY

problems' and got huge applause, then believably sold the fight with my partner."

Can I do a scene from a movie?

This is a question that continues to appear time and time again. Some instructors say absolutely not. Others don't care as long as it's well acted. But at the core of this issue is a deeper concern: most often the actor has watched the film first rather than having read the script exclusively. As CT Matthew Ellis adds, "When one actor has taken on the role, it is often hard to work past that interpretation."

CT Lacy Altwine advises against choosing iconic roles (i.e. *Batman*, *The Princess Bride*, *Star Wars*, etc.). "You've got enough to worry about with trying to overcome your entire audience's perception or memory of an already good performance. Unless you can truly bring something different to the performance and you KNOW you can blow us away, don't do it," she says.

Fulton Burns is an Advanced Actor Combatant and the Director of Acting & Performance at the University of South Alabama's Department of Dramatic Arts.



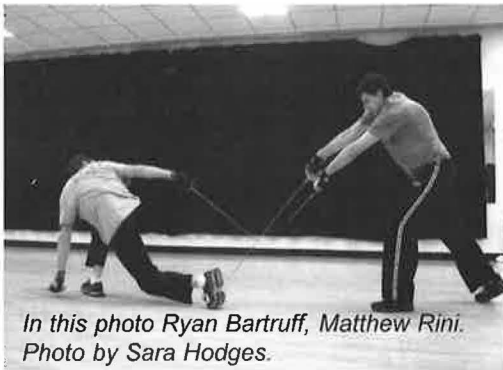
Sling is Slung

By Lisa Kopitsky

On a warm morning in a mild-mannered office building in lower Manhattan, with the sounds of the Google offices quietly tip-tapping away below, the venerable Atlantic Theater Company was transformed into a bloody, screaming death match. Ladies and gentlemen, the Sling is back.

This was the eleventh year for this unique four-day workshop in New York. Though sadly absent last year, the Summer Sling returned in full force, and more than made up for its brief hiatus. Under the expert leadership of Workshop Coordinator Robert 'Tink' Tuftee and his cohorts in Fights4, the students and teachers filled their weekend with exciting classes, new techniques, and a whole lotta blood.

The students ran the gamut from never-picked-up-a-sword beginners to seasoned professionals ready to tackle anything thrown at them. Classes ranged from basic Broadsword Avoidances to advanced Two-Handed Battle Axe vs. Broadsword and Shield. The studios of the Atlantic Acting School were converted into the narrow streets of Venice for CT Denise Hurd's Smallsword in Small Places, the craggy mountains of CT/FD Lewis Shaw's Giant Slaying class, and a



In this photo Ryan Bartruff, Matthew Rini.
Photo by Sara Hodges.

hopping nightclub about to be trashed by an all-out brawl for CT Ron Piretti's Creating Chaos.

The studios were absolutely beautiful and a joy to work in. The space, however,

is in a Manhattan office building – not exactly conducive to sprawling mass battles. *Ultimate cosmic pedigree! Itty-bitty rehearsal space.* Registration was kept small, but the intimacy of the workshop had its benefits. The smaller classes meant that students got more individualized attention, which in turn meant that everyone got to know each other better than at any regional workshop I've ever attended. With a student population that ranged from 40-60 attendees over the course of the long weekend, teachers got to know the students and to work with them on a level usually found in longer SPT classes.

It was also great to be in a centralized location, rather than spread out over a university campus as past workshops have been. It meant weapon transport was easier and corralling folks to and from classes and meetings. No one got lost (except getting to the bathrooms, of course!)

To top it off, the smaller spaces limited the number of people in each room, which meant that the interns were afforded the

unique and exciting opportunity to double as TAs for the classes.

A corps of interns, lead by the inimitable Lelia Shearer, took the workshop by storm, relishing the chance to work closely with both students and teachers. It was a rare experience to be in the position of both learner and learned, but these interns excelled at both. As one of those interns, I can attest to how much we appreciated the opportunity.

This was actually my first experience at the Sling, having never attended as a student, and I can honestly say that I was missing out. The joy of a weekend workshop is in the opportunity to take classes in a variety of disciplines from instructors you don't often get to work with, and this year's Sling didn't disappoint. Although the staff was largely New York-based, it was an incredible gathering of some of the best and brightest teachers giving us their all. In addition to the traditional technique classes, the teachers offered chances to explore the art above and beyond the standards. FM J. David Brimmer has been studying German Longsword on his own and brought in some ideas for his advanced students to play with, extrapolating from what technique they already knew and applying it to this new weapon style.

I was lucky enough to pop into CT/FD Michael Johnson's Five Kinds of Personal Violence class, which took a very simple piece of choreography and asked students to play with intention, really getting into the heart of acting the violence, both as attacker and victim. It was fascinating to watch how the look of the fight changed so drastically as MJ shifted the storyline and the intention behind each iteration of the exercise. This and many other classes really gave students a chance to explore the many different facets of what we do.

It was truly a sight to wander the halls of the Atlantic that

weekend. I think we can safely say that never before have the studios seen so many people bound with bungee cords and beaten with fire extinguishers – regardless of the theater's longstanding relationships with David Mamet and Martin McDonagh. Only at an SAFD regional workshop can students slip out of a Renaissance-era English Country Dance class to watch FM J. David Brimmer gleefully slitting a teenager's throat – a teenager with a grin on his face as wide as the gash gushing blood. All hail the Sling.



Galway McCullough.
Photo by Sara Hodges.



Cat Johnson cuts FM J. David Brimmer.
Photo by Sara Hodges.



Firearm Workshop Report

By Stephen Anderson

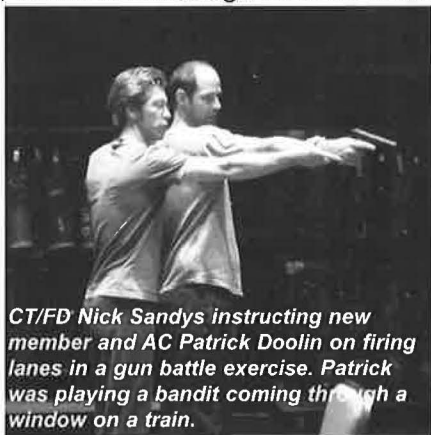
After six years, and the efforts of CT/FD Scot Mann, CT Don "Gunny" Preston, Dr. Julia Dye, and the past and present SAFD Governing Body, twenty-seven participants descended upon Chicago on July 26 and 27 for the First Annual Theatrical Firearms Safety Workshop; a workshop where the



CT/FD Scot Mann and FM Chuck Coyl giving a rifle disarm demonstration.

soul purpose was an intensive, in-depth look at firearms and how they are safely used on stage. The exceedingly experienced CT/FD Scot Mann led this two-day event with the assistance of Gun Wrangler AC Kelly L. Martin, FM Chuck Coyl, and CT/FD Nick Sandys. At our disposal was an armory of some seventy-five firearms and the historic Merle Reskin Theatre, which was generously donated by The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Day one began with a necessary lecture by Scot Mann that covered a broad array of topics including an introduction to firearms and ammunition, the theatrical designations for these weapons, backstage and on-set protocol for firearms, resources on the legal restrictions of firearms, demonstrations of the destructive force of firearms and blanks, as well as nightmare scenarios that have occurred by the misuse of firearms. As lunch rolled around, so too did CT Neil Massey of Rogue Steel. He brought an assortment of broadswords, small swords, single swords, rapiers & daggers, and his ever-popular deer skin gauntlets. It was a big bonus for the event to have some of these more playful weapons present.



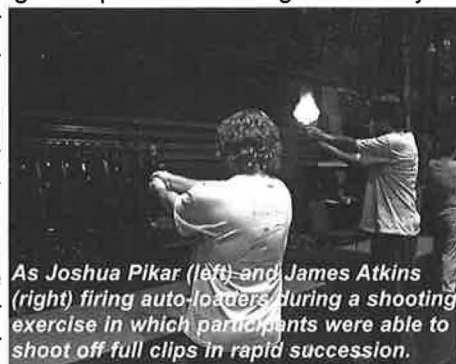
CT/FD Nick Sandys instructing new member and AC Patrick Doolin on firing lanes in a gun battle exercise. Patrick was playing a bandit coming through a window on a train.

After lunch Scot and Chuck Coyl led participants through a series of disarms involving hand held firearms. During this time participants could be seen twisting each other into various pretzel-like contortions and throwing one another to the ground. We concluded the day with a loading and unloading exercise, which permitted participants to load, un-load, and reload all the revolvers and autoloaders in stock. Participants were also walked through a muzzle loading demonstration.

Day two opened with Nick Sandys introducing fire lanes and how they are utilized within the choreography of a gunfight. Nick transported us to an old western train being robbed by

bandits crawling through windows and running along the roof of the moving locomotive. The next scenario we explored was a Slavic customs check point, where terrorists posing as a family, one of whom was wheelchair bound, used their semi-autos to get the better of the M-16 and AR-15 armed boarder patrol agents. This exercise ended in a gun battle where locked and loaded theatrical blank guns were used.

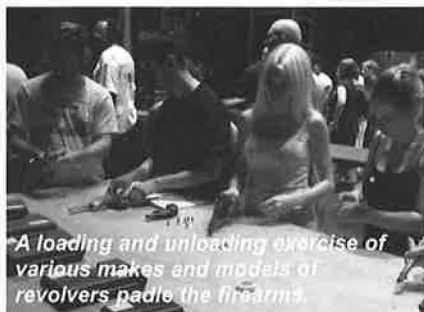
Scot then took us through the process of firing the variety of guns we had in our arsenal. I was astonished at how much ammunition we fired. The sound of gunfire reverberated off the walls of the Theatre. Hot ammo lay upon the stage floor. The smell of gunpowder was fresh in our nostrils. So much gun smoke hung in the air that the fire curtain had to be brought in. As I clutched a bag filled with over one thousand empty ammo casings I recall having the cliché thought "so many bullets so little time." Around me my fellow participants laughed, joked, and cajoled one another while firearms were re-loaded to pop off round after round.



As Joshua Pikar (left) and James Atkins (right) firing auto-loaders during a shooting exercise in which participants were able to shoot off full clips in rapid succession.

As the day waned all that remained was the two-part SAFD Firearms Safety Exam. Part one consisted of a three page written test containing true and false, short answer, and multiple-choice questions. Part two was a practical exam requiring each participant to demonstrate proficiency with loading and un-loading a revolver and a semi-automatic. While the exams were graded we killed time in the only way good stage combat artists with new found skills should ... we fired more guns!

This workshop ended with every participant having learned a ton about arguably the most serious weapon we deal with on stage. It also helped many to overcome any fears about these explosive weapons. Moreover, every participant successfully passed their exam. As I write this report, only one week after the close of the 2008 workshop, the 2009 workshop is already in the planning stages. Stay on the lookout for next years dates, curriculum, and our new website. Thank you to all who supported this workshop, particularly to our President, Geoffrey Kent, and Vice-President, John Tovar. As many have said: "It's about damn time."



A loading and unloading exercise of various makes and models of revolvers made the firearms.

Upcoming SPTs/SPRs

The SAFD membership is eager for opportunities to train, and *The Cutting Edge* is proud to keep you updated with the latest SPT/SPR events around the country. In addition to testing dates, we have also included information for classes being offered that will lead up to an SPT or provide an opportunity for an SPR. These classes can be through a college, university, private session or independent organization.

The structure of the information we request can be seen in the listings below. TBAs/TBDs are fine as long as there is contact information, however we do require an estimated date rather than listing a class as "on-going". This helps to prevent information from becoming stagnant or outdated. It doesn't matter how far ahead the dates may be. We will continue to print the information you send us in each issue until the date of your SPT/SPR has passed. As you find out more details, please update us so that we can maintain current information for the membership.

Helping the membership to find more training opportunities and assisting those providing these opportunities to spread the word is our primary goal with this section. Please email your events, suggestions and thoughts to cuttingedge@safd.org.

When: November 12, 2008
What: SPT - UA
Where: Shakespeare and Company, Lenox MA
CT: Angela Bonacasa
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer
Contact: Angela Bonacasa
goodhouse@hotplate.us

When: December 8, 2008
Where: Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA.
What: SPT - UA
CT/FD/FM: Michael G. Chin
Adjudicator: J. David Brimmer
Contact: Michael G. Chin, (646) 246-4061
mikechin@thestagecombat.com

When: December 17, 2008
Where: Willamette University, Salem, OR
What: SPT - RD
CT: Jonathan Cole
Adjudicator: Geoffrey Alm
Contact: Jonathan Cole, (503)-999-4709
jon@revengearts.com

When: Week of December 15, 2008
Where: City College of New York, New York, NY
What: SPT - UA
CT: Denise Hurd
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact: Denise Hurd, (917) 776-3192
DAHURD2000@aol.com

When: Week of December 15, 2008
Where: Frostburg State University, Frostburg, MD
What: SPT - QS
CT: Darrell Rushton
Adjudicator: Michael G. Chin
Contact: Darrell Rushton, (301) 687-4487
dsrushton@frostburg.edu

When: March 28, 2009
Where: Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA
What: SPT - R&D, BS, UA, and QS
CT: Michael Kirkland
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact: Michael Kirkland
W (757) 226-4730,
C (757) 617-7174
michhil@regent.edu
michhil@gmail.com

When: March 28-29, 2009
Where: Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA
What: VA Beach BASH - SPRs - TBA
CT: Michael Kirkland
Adjudicator: TBA
Contact: Michael Kirkland
W (757) 226-4730
C (757) 617-7174
michhil@regent.edu
michhil@gmail.com

When: January 18, 2009
Where: Elgin Community College, Elgin, Ill.
What: SPRs – weapons as requested
Class: January 16 – 18, 2009
CT: TBD
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: John Tovar, (630) 330-4293
john_tovar@sbcglobal.net

When: June 5, 2009
Where: Eureka College, Eureka, Ill.
What: SPT – SS and S&S
Class: May 18 – June 5, 2009
CT: TBD
Adjudicator: TBD
Contact: Holly Rocke, (309) 467-6580
hrocke@eureka.edu



SAFD Award and Scholarship History

By Michael Mueller

"The Society of American Fight Directors awards are presented to individuals or organizations that have shown exemplary work or service to the organization, or dedication to the staged combative arts." (SAFD P&P) I think that we often forget how lucky we are to be members of such a generous and giving organization. One of the ways our organization recognizes the achievements of its members is through the awards that are presented each year at the National Stage Combat Workshops. While these awards are published each year, I felt that it is important that we revisit the past and expand the knowledge of our newer members with a reflection on all those who have been awarded in the past. In addition, it is equally important to detail the history of these awards for our historical record as well as to remind everyone reading the list what the full achievement of those receiving each award has accomplished.

Our President, Geoffrey Kent, presented this idea to me and I'm hoping that any missing information can be gathered from responses to this article. The following information is a combination of the current P&P with details provided from CT/FD Angela Bonacasa, FM Emeritus David Boushey, FM Michael Chin, FM Chuck Coyl, CT/FD Geoffrey Kent, Linda McCollum, and FM Richard Raether regarding the history of SAFD awards. As you will see, there are gaps in the information we would like to fill. Any and all additional information would be very helpful. The information could include an award that was left out, the name of who initiated or founded the award; additional names of award winners, or any information you feel should be included with the details of an award's history.

The David Boushey Founder's Award for Excellence in Unarmed Combat (FA)

Established in 1999 by Drew Fracher.

Recipient(s) selected by Fight Masters present at the NSCW
This award is presented to an individual attending the NSCW who has shown the most prowess in unarmed combat, and is not always given. There is no criteria required to earn the award, but FME David Boushey emphasized that recipients must be "a damn good unarmed combatant". This particular area of expertise was selected because realistic, safe unarmed combat enhances the theatrical spectacle in both film and theatre.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. Memorial Scholarship (DFS)

Established in [year] by [name(s)].

Recipient(s) must be nominated by a member of the SAFD Governing Body, Fight Master, Fight Director or Certified Teacher and are selected by the Governing Body.

This award is presented annually to a SAFD Friend, Actor/Combatant or Advanced Actor/Combatant in good standing who, in the opinion of the Governing Body, has shown themselves worthy of assistance in continuing their training. The scholarship, given in memory and honor of swashbuckling film star and SAFD Honorary Member, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., will provide tuition and housing for attendance at the NSCW Actor/Combatant Workshop, Intermediate Actor/Combatant Workshop or Advanced Actor/Combatant Workshop.

The James Finney Memorial Award (JFA)

Established in 1999 by ???.

Recipient(s) selected by [names or titles of those who select the winners]

This award is presented to an individual attending the NSCW who has shown the greatest determination in life and/or the

art of stage combat; and is given to people who are dealing with adversity. The award is given in the memory and in honor of Fight Director, James Finney (Finneypot), and is not always given.

The Patrick 'Paddy' Crean Award (PCA)

Established in 1985 by the Executive Committee.

Recipient(s) selected by [names or titles of those who select the winners]

This award originally pertained to the best male and female actor combatants at the NSCW in 1985 and was altered in 1987 to reflect the definition that it holds today. It is presented to an individual who has displayed a high degree of skill as an Actor/Combatant, has emerged as a leader among their peers and displays a commitment to honorable and just actions in all they do. The award is not always given.

The President's Award (PA)

Established in 1992 by [name(s)].

Recipient(s) selected by the President of the SAFD

This award is presented to an individual who has given of their time and commitment to the SAFD above and beyond the call of duty.

The Swashbuckler's Award (SA)

Established in 2008 by FD Richard Lane, author of *Swashbuckling: The Art of Stage Combat & Theatrical Swordplay*.

Recipient(s) selected by staff present at each NSCW

The award isn't an official SAFD P&P scholarship or award, but rather an endowment from Richard Lane of \$1000 per year to the NSCW, split equally between the East and West. It is awarded to the workshop participant(s) who shows outstanding commitment and trust, and because it's a partnered art, who is the most giving, most adaptable, and

expresses the most joy in the work as determined by the staff of the workshop. This is a cash award where the student is presented with a check written out directly to him/her.

Best Male and Female Performer at the NSCW (BMP & BFP)

Established in 1985 by the Executive Committee.

Recipient(s) selected by the NSCW on-site faculty

This award is presented to individuals attending the NSCW whose overall performance in the classroom and during the Skills Proficiency Test stands out above all others.

Best Male and Female Performer at the AACW (BMP/AACW & BFP/AACW)

Established in [year] by [name(s)].

Recipient(s) selected by the NSCW on-site faculty

This award is presented to individuals attending the AACW whose overall performance in the classroom and during the Skills Proficiency Test stands out above all others.

Best Scene NSCW (BS)

Established in 1985 by the Executive Committee.

Recipient(s) selected by the NSCW on-site faculty

This award is presented to the pair of individuals whose scene during the Skills Proficiency Test stands out above all others.

Best Scene AACW (BS/AACW)

Established in [year] by [name(s)].

Recipient(s) selected by the NSCW on-site faculty

This award is presented to the pair of individuals whose scene during the Skills Proficiency Test stands out above all others.

List of Award Winners

1980 (1st NSCW – City, STATE)

1981 (2nd NSCW – City, STATE)

1982 (3rd NSCW – City, STATE)

1983 (4th NSCW – City, STATE)

1984 (5th NSCW – City, STATE)

1985 (6th NSCW – Cedar City, UT)

PCA/BFP – Patrice Egleston

PCA/BMP – Matt Glave

PCA/BS – Chuck Conwell and Matt Glave
– *True West*

1986 (7th NSCW – Memphis, TN)

PCA/BFP – Roseanne Hauer

PCA/BMP – Brian Byrnes and Brian Tinker

PCA/BS – Mark Olsen and Robert Seale –
Start the Restoration Without Me

1987 (8th NSCW – Memphis, TN)

1st Advanced Workshop and Teacher
Certification Course

PCA – Armand Shultz

BFP / ACW – N/A

BMP / ACW – Robert Behrens

BS / ACW – Armand Shultz and Joe

Dempsey – *Siskel and Ebert Fight*

Through Cinema's Great Confrontations

1988 (9th NSCW – Memphis, TN)

2nd (Advanced) Teacher Training Program

PCA – Martin Pistone

BFP / ACW – k. Jenny Jones

BMP / ACW – Brian Russell and David
Doorscak

BS / ACW – Brian Russell and David
Doorscak

1989 (10th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

3rd Teacher Training Program

PCA – David Engel

BFP / ACW – Ann Tsuji

BMP / ACW – Dan Kucan

BS / ACW – David Engel and Ann Tsuji

Most Promising Teacher – Doug Mumaw

1990 (11th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

Advanced Stage Combat Workshop

PCA – Linda McCollum

BFP / ACW – Christine Hall

BMP / ACW – John McFarland

BFP / AACW – Tina Hansen

BMP / AACW – Michael Kirkland

BS – Michael Kirkland and Tina Hansen

1991 (12th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

2nd Advanced Stage Combat Workshop

PCA – Dan Carter

BFP / ACW – Regan Forman

BMP / ACW – John Scheidler

BS / ACW – Victoria Anzaldúa and Matt
Janicki – *The Wrath of Tinkerbell*

BFP / AACW – Willis Middleton

BMP / AACW – Jonathan Howell

BS / AACW – John Cashman and Mike
Mahaffey – *The Good, The Bad, and the
Stupid*

1992 (13th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

4th (Advanced) Teacher Training Program

PA – David "Pops" Duersch

PCA – Bob Mac Dougall

BFP / ACW – Darla Max

BMP / ACW – Joseph Manussier

BS / ACW – Paul Steger and Joseph
Manussier – *The Actor's Nightmare*

Most Improved / ACW – Linda Van Polen

Most Promising Teacher – Jamie
Cheatham

BS / AACW – John Cashman and Mike

Mahaffey – *The Good, The Bad, and the
Stupid*

1993 (14th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

3rd Advanced Stage Combat Workshop

PA – Mark Guinn

PCA – Bruce Cromer

BFP / ACW – Kaddy Feast

BMP / ACW – Galway McCullough

BS / ACW – Kaddy Feast and Martin
Nayes

BFP / AACW – Jeanie Smith

BMP / AACW – Scott Mann

BS / AACW – Ted DeChatelet and Bruce
Cromer

1994 (15th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

4th Advanced Stage Combat Workshop

PA – Joseph Martinez

PCA – Richard Raether

BFP / ACW – Robin Armstrong

BMP / ACW – Tim Bell

BS / ACW – Nate Bittman and Eamon
Glennon – *Dracula*

BFP / AACW – k. Jenny Jones

BMP / AACW – Bob Borwick

BS / AACW – Tim Tait and Ian Marshall –
Ying and Yang

1995 (16th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

5th Teacher Training Workshop

PA – John Bolomo

PCA – Mark "Rat" Guinn

BFP / ACW – Monica Russell

BMP / ACW – Daniel Lemieux

BS / ACW – David Coyle and Christopher
Carbonne – *Hamlet meets Arnold
Schwarzenegger*

Most Promising Teacher – Randy Lee
Bailey

1996 (17th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)

5th Advanced Stage Combat Workshop

PA – Michael Anderson

PCA – Bill Lengfelder

BFP / ACW – Wendy Vander Velde
 BMP / ACW – Clay Van Sickle
 BS / ACW – Lance Brannon and Stephen Buck – *Hamlet*
 BFP / AACW – Nicole Calleder
 BMP / AACW – Paul Molnar
 BS / AACW – D.C. Wright and Tracy Wood – *Macbeth*

1997 (18th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 6th Advanced Stage Combat Workshop
 PA – Margaret Raether
 PCA – John Paul Scheidler
 BFP / ACW – Jill Matarelli
 BMP / ACW – Jeff Thomason
 BS / ACW – Khris Lewin and Otis Cook – *Sound of the Voice*
 BFP / AACW – Maren Perry
 BMP / AACW – John McCarthy
 BS / AACW – Aaron Anderson and John McCarthy – *Falstaff and Pistol*

1998 (19th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 PA – Colleen Kelly
 PCA – Donald Preston
 BFP / ACW – Jennifer Waldroup
 BMP / ACW – Robert Behrens
 BS / ACW – Leigh Ann Wilson and Caleb Terray

1999 (20th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 7th Advanced Stage Combat Workshop
 PA – Chris LaMontagne
 PCA – Michael Anderson
 FA – Jeff Thomason
 JFA – Jill Matarelli
 BFP / ACW – Jessica Pillmore – *Fool For Love*
 BMP / ACW – Drew Vidol – *True West*
 BS / ACW – Thomas Taylor and Matthew Kepler – *Romeo & Juliet*
 BFP / AACW – Florence Corre
 BMP / AACW – David Dean Hastings
 BS / AACW – Angela Bonacasa and David Dean Hastings – *Conscious Lovers*

2000 (21st NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 1st Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshop
 PA – Chuck Coyl
 PCA – Angela Bonacasa
 FA – Jessica Pillmore
 BFP / ACW – Mary Otte
 BMP / ACW – Charles Q. Drexler
 BS / ACW – Benaiah Anderson and Nicholas Bonora – *Romeo & Juliet*
 BFP / IACW – Kimberly Jurgen
 BMP / IACW – Russell Rinker
 BS / IACW – Robert Radkoff-Ek and Robb Hunter – *Long Day's Journey Into Night*

2001 (22nd NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 PA – Julia Rupkalvis
 PCA – Geoffrey Kent
 FA – Joe Gerrits and Christopher Niebling
 JFA – Donald Preston
 BFP / ACW – Andrea Dammerman
 BMP / ACW – James Elly
 BS / ACW – Bevin Kaye and Nathan Hedrick – *Miss Saigon*

2002 (23rd NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 PA – Michael Chin
 PCA – Jeff Koep
 FA – Tony Clarno
 JFA – Denise Hurd
 BFP / ACW – Pam Hurley
 BMP / ACW – Jose Garcia
 BS / ACW – Matthew Ellis and Scott Deans – *Three Scenes*
 BFP / AACW – Deborah Fialkow
 BMP / AACW – Mark Mineart
 BS / AACW – Mark Mineart and Robb Hunter – *Cyrano*

2003 (24th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV)
 PA – Lewis Shaw
 PCA – Jeff "Ish" Thomason
 BFP / ACW – Maggie MacDonald
 BMP / ACW – Nathan Mitchell
 BS / ACW – Nathan Mitchell and Kelly McLaughlin – *Lovers and Executioners in Broadsword*
 BFP / IACW – Andrea Dammerman
 BMP / IACW – Paul Hope
 BS / IACW – Fulton Burns and Michael Brafford – *3 Musketeers: All Swash and No Buckle in Smallsword*

2004 (25th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV and Winston-Salem, NC)
 PA – John Coleman / AGMA
 PCA East – Jacki Blackeney
 PCA West – Lacy Altwine
 FA – Ryan Bechard
 JFA – Heidi Wolf
 BFP / ACW – Kelly Mizell
 BMP / ACW – Brian Plocharczyk
 BS / ACW – Brian Plocharczyk and Kelly Mizell – *Fool For Love*
 BFP / IACW – Maggie Macdonald
 BMP / IACW – Colby Baker
 BS / IACW – Monalisa Arias and Rachel Stubbs – *Zasstrozzi*

2005 (26th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV and Winston-Salem, NC)
 PA – Bob Mac Dougall
 DFS – Jessica Dunne
 BFP / ACW – Catherine Moore
 BMP / ACW – Matt McKay
 BS / ACW – Catherine Morre and Rusty Tennant – *Waiting for Lefty*

BFP / AACW – Jessica Dunne
 BMP / AACW – Willie Meybohm
 BS / IACW – Matthew R. Wilson and Zachary Dorsey – *McBane* (an original script)

2006 (27th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV and Winston-Salem, NC)
 PA – Mark "Rat" Guinn
 PCA – Sterling Swan
 JFA – David Kelch,
 BFP / ACW – Sarah Pitard
 BMP / ACW – Edgar Landa
 BS / ACW – Joel Hunt and Bryan Wakefield – *Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged*
 BFP / IACW – Catherine Moore
 BMP / IACW – Rusty Tennant
 BS / IACW – Brandon Burk and Drew Vidal – *School of Night*

2007 (28th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV and Winston-Salem, NC)
 PA – Drew Fracher
 PCA East – Angela Bonacasa
 PCA West – Maria Gonzalez
 BFP / ACW – Pamela Z. Sears
 BMP / ACW – Roger Casey
 BS / ACW – Collin Bressie and Jason Peregoy – *Scapin*
 BFP / IACW – Lisa Kopitsky
 BMP / IACW – Jason Whicker
 BS / IACW – Lisa Kopitsky and Kalob Martinez – *Juliet and Her Romeo*
 BFP / AACW – (Tie) Sarah Pitard and Cathy Moore
 BMP / AACW – Nathan Unsworth
 BS / AACW – Adam Critchlow and Sterling Swann – *Lonesome West*

2008 (29th NSCW – Las Vegas, NV and Winston-Salem, NC)
 PA – Michael Chin
 PCA East – Shawn Ergler
 PCA West – Tim Bell
 FA East – Mat Cole
 FA West – David McCormick
 JFA East – Elizabeth "Missy" Styles
 SA East – Lauren Cafrelli and Alex Jeffery
 BFP / ACW – Shelly Johnson
 BMP / ACW – Barrett Doyle
 BS / ACW – Shawn Ergler and Ben Thomas for *Beowulf* and Shelly Johnson and Ben Kahre for *The Honest Courtesan*
 BFP / IACW – Candace Hackett
 BMP / IACW – Brian Evans
 BS / IACW – Brian Hamlin and Danette Baker – *The Rover*
 BFP / AACW – Cara Rawlings
 BMP / AACW – David Reed
 BS / AACW – John Evenden and Cara Rawlings – *Kumdo*



The NSCW/East and West Reports

Two Great Workshops ... Two Great Places ... Two Years Running!

By CT Angela Bonacasa and FM Michael G. Chin



As a result of the continuing success of the Society of American Fight Directors' (SAFD) training and the growing interest from students seeking to further their stage combat experience, the SAFD has continued their "divide and conquer" approach to the National Stage Combat Workshop (NSCW). For the second year in a row, the NSCW was held in two different locations. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, which has been the gracious host of the NSCW for the past twenty years, continued to be the home of the Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshop (IACW) and the Advanced Actor Combatant Workshop (AACW), as the NSCW/West. North Carolina School of The Arts (NCSA) in Winston-Salem, N.C., which has been associated with the NSCW since 2004, retained the Actor Combatant Workshop (ACW) and the Introduction to Stage Combat course (ISC), as the NSCW/East. The following reports demonstrate how the SAFD's growth and success is exemplified through these workshops.



Shawn Ergler as Beowulf and Ben Thomas as Grendel in their Broadsword SPT. Photo by Sara Hodges.

2008 NSCW East Coordinator's Report

NSCW East Staff:

Coordinator: Angela Bonacasa
On Site Coordinator: Dale Girard
Head Teaching Assistant/
Assistant Coordinator: Mike Mahaffey
Head Intern: Jessica Dunne

ACW Instructors:

J. David Brimmer
k. Jenny Jones
Richard Ryan

ACW Teaching Assistants/ISC Instructors:

Paul Dennhardt (assisted FM Jones)
Robert Hamilton
Todd Loweth (Assisted FM Brimmer)
Mike Mahaffey
Martin Noyes (Assisted FM Ryan)

Interns:

Sara Hodges Tonya Lynn
Jenny Male Elizabeth "Missy" Styles
Diego Villada

ACW Participants:

Arya Arabshahi	Sarah Beckerman
Gretchen Breslawski	Lauren Cafrelli
Mathew Cole	Mirla Criste
Cat Johnson	Melissa Delgado
Charles Del Risco	Barrett Doyle
Shawn Ergler	James Henry
Stacy Horning	Gwen Jensen
Shelley Johnson	Jesse Jones
Benjamin Kahre	James "J.T." Kidd
Carl Long	Phillip Meece
Stephen Robert Michel	Katie Moeller
Jule Nelson-Duac	Claire Nickerson
Jay Peterson	Sean Richards
Steven Schwall	Sydney Schwindt
William Stockman	Benjamin Thomas
Mike Toperzer	Dustin Vandenberg
Sarah Wahl	Julia Welch
Shawn Worthington	Christine Zagrobelny

ISC Participants:

Thom Bemis	Ryan Carlin
J'aime Davies	Holden Goodman
Stacia Hitt	Alexander Jeffery
Rebecca Novello	Wes Rice
Shelly Riggs	Mitra Salehi
Bryan Sloyer	Jared Thompson



The partnership between the SAFD and the North Carolina School of the Arts continued in 2008, as the Actor Combatant workshop (ACW) and Introduction to Stage Combat (ISC) once again ran on the NCSA campus during the month of July. Although running without the TTW for the first time, the NSCW East was still full of energy, laughter, fun, and of course, stage combat. The fifteen staff members were kept hopping by the incredible group of thirty-six ACW students and twelve ISC students.

In the ACW, students learned the brutality of Broadsword from FM J. David Brimmer and CT assistant Todd Loweth, the thrill of Unarmed combat from FM k. Jenny Jones and FD assistant Paul Dennhardt, and the joy of Rapier and Dagger from FM Richard Ryan and CT assistant Martin Noyes. In the non-testing class slot, CT Robert Hamilton taught Single Sword, followed by CT/Assistant Coordinator Mike Mahaffey teaching Knife. First week master classes included a smattering of different subjects from Alexander technique, to trust exercises, to "Silly Sword". Evening rehearsals began on Friday of the first week, giving students the opportunity to rehearse what they learned during class time.

In the ISC, students received 10.5 hours in all eight SAFD disciplines. They began with Unarmed (Dennhardt), Broadsword (Hamilton), Quarterstaff (Loweth) and Single Sword (Noyes), and transitioned to Rapier and Dagger (Hamilton), Smallsword (Loweth), Sword and Shield (Noyes), and Knife (Mahaffey). Movies were again a part of the curriculum, as *The Sea Hawk*, *The Mark of Zorro*, and other classic swash-buckling films were shown on the big screen. There were a number of master classes held as well, including Falls and Rolls with Mahaffey, Alexander Technique with Dennhardt, Fundamentals of Choreography with Hamilton, and a version of "Death and Dying" with FM Brimmer.

Although there was plenty of time spent learning technique and rehearsing, both students and staff still found time to have fun. The banana shenanigans between Ryan and Noyes were a constant source of entertainment, and Morale Officers Paul Dennhardt and Jenny Male did a phenomenal job raising the spirits of the students and creating a true ensemble. There were stage combat quizzes and prizes, as well as songs, super hero competitions, and even "Christmas in July" with Secret Santas. And, in what will probably go down as possibly the best morale experience ever in NSCW East history, FM Richard Ryan and CT Mike Mahaffey were able to arrange with a local theatre the opportunity to see an opening night, midnight showing of the newest installment of the Batman films, *The Dark Night...for the entire workshop*. With the exception of only a few, all the students and staff gathered in the theatre parking lot, and descended upon our own theatre to watch the movie. The next day was a long one filled with large amounts of coffee, but the experience was definitely one of the highlights of the workshop.

Merchandise Night at the end of week two was a big hit as well, with loads of SAFD merchandise for sale along with Richard Ryan's "Batman Fight Crew" t-shirts. Both Walter Triplette and Lewis Shaw were in attendance, so there was a variety of stage combat related stuff to browse through and purchase. Broadway Cares, Equity Fights Aids (BCEFA) raffle tickets also went on sale, with donations



Photo by Mike Mahaffey.

from Zen Warrior Armory, Richard Ryan, Neil Massey, Lewis Shaw, Bob Burgee, Western Stage Props, David Woolley, and a slew of SAFD regional workshops.

But all workshops must come to an end, unfortunately, and all too quickly it was time for the closing ceremonies. The ISC ceremonies came first, with awards and certificates handed out to the students, along with special prizes. In a surprise

move, the roles were reversed, and the ISC students handed out their own awards to the staff. It was a great surprise, and there were plenty of hugs, tears, and foam ninja stars to go around.

Once the Skills Proficiency Tests, a short dinner break, and a last wild run at buying raffle tickets were completed, the ACW closing ceremonies kicked off with the handing out of the intern awards. The ceremonies transitioned quickly to an emotional note, as the NSCW staff awarded a certificate for one Lewis Shaw broadsword to ACW student Jay Peterson, who was preparing for a return to Iraq for his third tour of duty. The presentation of the Official NSCW Awards and the BCEFA drawing closed out the ceremonies, with the NSCW East staff and students raising over \$1600 for BCEFA. From there, the party moved to Marshall Street Smokehouse, where staff and students ate and drank before going back to the apartments to close out a great workshop.

Paddy Crean Award: Shawn Ergler

Founders Award: Mat Cole

James Finney Award: Elizabeth "Missy" Styles

Swashbuckling Award: Lauren Cafrelli and Alex Jeffery

Best Female Performer / ACW: Shelly Johnson

Best Male Performer / ACW: Barrett Doyle

Best Scene: Shawn Ergler and Ben Thomas for *Beowulf* and Shelly Johnson and Ben Kahre for *The Honest Courtesan*

2008 NSCW West Coordinator's Report

Coordinator: FM Michael G. Chin

On-site Coordinator: Linda McCollum

IACW & AACW Instructors:

CT Tim Bell

FM Bryan Byrnes

FME David Boushey

FM Michael G. Chin

FM Drew Fracher

FM Dale Girard

CT Denise Hurd

CT Ray Rodriguez

Interns:

Oliver Donahue Jayme Green

Travis Sims Jamie Stires

Catherine (Cathy) Moore



IACW Participants:

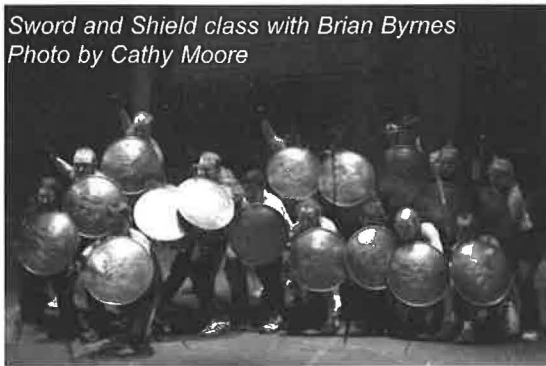
Jessica E. Allen	Danette Baker
Nicole (Nikki) Craft	Jeremy A. Earl
John Esslinger	Brian Evans
Candace Hackett	Brian Hamlin
David McCormick	Camelia Poespowidjojo
Toby Pruett	Adam Rutledge
	Robert Whiston

AACW Participants:

Michael Daw	John Evenden
Jonathan Clyde Jolly	Marianna Kozij
Ciaran O'Grady	Cara Rawlings
David Reed	Sterling Swann
Trevor Swann	Rusty Tennant

This past summer, the 29th Annual National Stage Combat Workshop was held on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This made twenty consecutive years of summer combat at this location; but for only the second time

Sword and Shield class with Brian Byrnes
Photo by Cathy Moore



in SAFD history, the workshop consisted of all "non beginner" level students. Although considered intimate by past workshop attendance standards, the

Intermediate (IACW) and Advanced (AACW) level students who came to NSCW/West made up for the low numbers with their enthusiasm and expertise.

During the first week of the workshop the twenty-three participants were afforded the opportunity to renew their skill proficiency in all eight-weapon forms (if they qualified). Regardless of their workshop affiliation, participants were broken into four smaller groups for three days of almost one-on-one training from AACW Coordinator, FM Dale Girard (Smallsword and Sword & Shield), IACW Coordinator, FM Drew Fracher (Quarterstaff and Rapier & Dagger), FM Brian Byrnes (Knife and Broadsword) and FM Michael Chin (Single sword and Unarmed) in preparation for their Skill Proficiency Renewals (SPRs).

On Thursday evening all participants performed their SPRs. The personal training and additional tutoring from CT Tim Bell, CT Denise Hurd CT Ray Rodriguez and five interns (AACs Oliver Donahue, Jayme Green, Cathy Moore, Travis Sims and Jamie Stires), was invaluable as everyone did very well.

The following day, the IACW reassembled into a single group of thirteen combatants while the remaining ten made up the AACW. Everyone immediately started work on the Skills Proficiency Tests (SPTs). FM Fracher taught Single sword in the AACW and Smallsword in IACW. FM Girard taught Knife

and Quarterstaff in the AACW. While FM Byrnes taught Sword and Shield in the IACW and Smallsword in the AACW and FM Chin taught Knife in the IACW.

The Maestro, David Boushey arrived to lend his help at the end of the first week. For three days he taught Film Fighting to both workshops. His work culminated in a filmed barroom brawl scene. CTs Bell, Hurd and Rodriguez also treated both workshops to master classes in such diversified topics as Gun Safety, Fighting in Period Clothing and CPR certification.



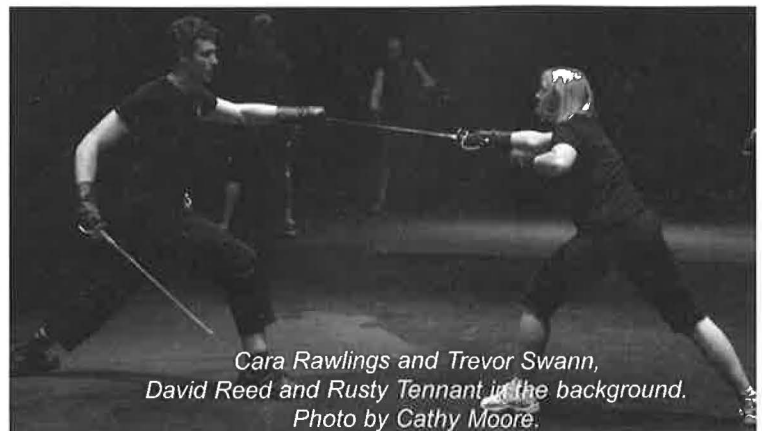
Maestro Boushey teaching his Film Fighting Workshop to NSCW West AACWs and IACWs. On stage (left to right) AACW Trevor Swann, David Boushey, CT Tim Bell, Intern Travis Sims

Photo by Cathy Moore

SPT fights were presented at the end of week three, followed by the annual closing night ceremonies. The intern and workshop awards were presented at the close of the ceremonies with awards going to the following recipients. For some reason beyond my understanding, President Geoffrey Kent presented The President's Award to yours truly. Thanks, Jefe.

After the presentation of the awards the Interns put on a show entitled *The History of the SAFD, abridged*. There were lots of laughs and as the saying goes; "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas".

President's Award – Michael Chin
Paddy Crean-West Award – Tim Bell
The Founder's Award for Excellence
in Unarmed Stage Combat – David McCormick
Best Female Performer / IACW – Candace Hackett
Best Male Performer / IACW – Brian Evans
Best Scene in the IACW –
Brian Hamlin and Danette Baker for *The Rover*
Best Female Performer / AACW – Cara Rawlings
Best Male Performer / AACW – David Reed
Best Scene in the AACW –
John Evenden and Cara Rawlings for *Kumdo*



Thank you from the East

First and foremost, I would like to thank Gerald Freedman and Robert Beseda for once again embracing the SAFD and supporting the NSCW. NCSA Secretaries Mary Jane Degnan and Teresa Prevatte, as usual, are the eyes and ears of NCSA and are the reason that this puppy runs. HUGE thanks go to Brent LaFever and the rest of the Performance Place staff for giving us everything we need, including rearranging all the seats in the Catawba theatre.

Thank you to my staff of wonderful TAs. You were phenomenal. I was truly lucky to have you on board this year. Thank



AACW Quarterstaff class. Foreground Cara Rawlings, John Evenden and Background CT Ray Rodriguez, David Reed, Marianna Kozij.

Photo by Cathy Moore.

all those who donated to the BCEFA raffle; the SAFD wouldn't be able to make the difference that it has without your selfless donations. Great appreciation and thanks go to Richard Lane for his financial generosity and support of SAFD members in his creation of the Swashbuckling Award. A special thank you goes out to Cathy Brookshire for all her help with the merchandise pre-orders, and for schlepping her family to N.C. to help with the insanity that was Merchandise Night. And of course, thank you to Dale Girard for all your hard work on behalf of the SAFD and NCSA.

Finally, to all the ISC and ACW students: you are the reason that we do what we do, and your energy and joy is what drives these workshops. Thank you so much for trusting us with your training this summer, and I hope that we cross swords again at another stage combat hoo haa very soon. Thank you!!!

CT Angela Bonacasa

Thank you from the West

Special thanks go to Neil Massey and Lewis Shaw for their generous donations of fine cutlery for the above-mentioned awards. I would be remiss if I did not extend a very big thank you to CT/FD Richard Lane who graciously donated \$500 that was presented to the Best Male and Female combatants in both workshops as part of the newly established Swashbucklers Award.

This workshop was special for me, since it was my last one as NSCW Coordinator. After a twelve-year run as "The Emperor", I am stepping down to end the Chin Dynasty. It has been a great run, but it's time to move on. Over the past sixteen years (four spent as the Assistant Coordinator) many folks have worked for me and with me to make me look good. From the bottom of my heart I thank them all. I appreciate their hard work, camaraderie and shared love for this organization. I would like to especially thank the Governing Body, and my good buddy Drew Fracher, who was the president back in 1998, for giving me the opportunity to drive the bus.



k. Jenny Jones prepares for her Unarmed class. Photo by Mike Mahaffey.

If I could have chosen a better crew to finish my run, I would've been hard pressed to do so. I would like to thank my Cracker Jack team of interns, Teaching Assistants, my colleagues and best pals, Drew bob, DAG, Brian and of course the Maestro for making me laugh really hard this past summer. Thank you to everybody who dropped in on us, especially newly minted Treasurer Lee Soroko and President Geoffrey Kent. I wish the new Governing Body all the best. And, although he wasn't present, I would also like to thank my buddy Chuck Coyl. It wasn't the same without you this year.

Finally, I thank the great UNLV faculty and staff, especially Dean Koep and TD Scott Hansen for making us feel welcomed. Last, but not least, the "Empress in Residence" Linda McCollum, who has always made me look good year after year.

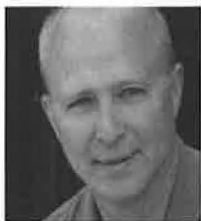
As one dynasty ends another begins! Thanks to all.

FM Michael G. Chin



IACW Sword and Shield class. Photo by Cathy Moore.

Changing of the Guard



My thanks to the SAFD for giving me the opportunity to contribute to it's structure. Thanks also to the various Regional Representatives that have served over the years. I leave the committee knowing that it is in good hands with Russ Brown and that he inherits a healthy organization. The Regional Roundup has become one of the highlights of *The Cutting Edge*, and my hope is that the Representatives will continue to strengthen their relationships with the various theatre conferences in their region. Once again Thanks, and good luck!

CT/FD Payson Burt



Howdy Campers! H. Russ Brown here. I am honored to take on the position of Regional Representative Coordinator for the SAFD. My predecessor, Payson Burt, has laid the groundwork to make my transition into this position a successful one. We should all be very grateful for his years of service. I hope to continue his exemplary efforts and build from the streamlining and consistency he brought to the gathering, processing and dissemination of SAFD news and info. Doing so has helped to make the SAFD Regional Representatives the 'go-to folk' for potential, new and current SAFD members.

I am thankful for the opportunity to give back to this organization that has already given me so much. I am an SAFD Certified Teacher and Advanced Actor Combatant currently serving as Head of Performance at Lon Morris College in Jacksonville, TX. My areas of expertise include Acting, Musical Theatre, Voice/Dialects, Playwriting, Movement & Stage Combat. My proudest accomplishments are my 19-year marriage to my wife, Elizabeth, and our two beautiful children: Auben, 9, and Grant, 15.

"Love is my Sword, Faith is my Armor & Humor is my Shield."

CT H. Russ Brown

Regional Reports

Great Lakes Region

Illinois, Indiana,
Michigan, Ohio,
Wisconsin



By Jim
Stark

GLRegRep@safd.org

Friend Mary Shen Barnidge continues to observe, promote and critique the art of stage combat as it is practiced in the Chicago area. She writes for the newsletter *Moulinet*.

CT/FD/FD REP Jamie Cheatham performed the title role and staged the fights for *Macbeth* at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Five of his students took their broadsword SPT after the performance. Over the summer he taught Unarmed classes as part of the Summer Theatre Conservatory with the Milwaukee Rep. This fall he directed *Winter's Tale*, also at Parkside, where he heads the acting program. He

continues to make dolls at the Bristol Renn Faire, enjoying visits with the Swordsmen.

FM Chuck Coyl recently staged the fights for the world premiere of Brett Neveu's new play *Gas For Less* at the Goodman Theatre and the world premiere of Tracy Lett's new play *Superior Donuts*, starring Michael McKean at the Steppenwolf Theatre. In November of this year he is staging the fights for a production of *August: Osage County*, to be performed at the National Theatre in London.

CT Bruce Cromer recently won a 2008 Cincinnati Entertainment Award for his performance as King Lear at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. He played Salieri in *Amadeus* for the CSC in September, and is returning to play Scrooge at the Cincinnati Playhouse in December, Grin Dell in the Human Race Theatre's *Brother Wolf* in January 2009, and Frederik in *A Little Night Music* at the New Stage Collective in May. He continues to teach acting and movement (including stage combat) as a full Professor at Wright State University. He

was happy to use the talents of his AC son, Charlie Cromer, to substitute for an injured SPT partner at the spring 2008 WSU test.

CT/FD Paul Dennhardt directed the fights for *Richard III* for the Shakespeare Festival of St. Louis in May/June. In July he assisted FM k. Jenny Jones and taught at the National Stage Combat Workshop East.

Although on-going health concerns made it necessary for **FM Erik Fredricksen** to withdraw from this summer's NCSA SAFD teaching, he was able to accept an invitation to teach in Denmark for a shorter period of time. While there he taught students and teachers from Norway, Finland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, and Russia at the Nordic Society of Stage Combat. Erik is a founding member of that society, in addition to being a co-founder of the SAFD.

CT Andrew Hayes continues to teach at DePauw University and work locally as an Actor and Fight Director. He recently designed the fight choreography for the Putnam County Playhouse Youth

Regional Reports continued

Workshop's production of *Hamlet*. He is currently in production for a world premiere of a musical titled *Einstein and the Roosevelts*. This spring he will be teaching a Single Sword skills class in conjunction with a class titled Renaissance Culture and Combat.

Friend Kateri Kline-Johnson just finished a full summer of renaissance festivals, squeezed in work on several small indie movies and is currently in pre-production on *WonderTown*, which started shooting September 7, 2008. She said that she is "learning A LOT about film fighting."

CT Brian LeTraunik spent his summer performing in WIU's Summer Music Theatre, appearing in *Children of Eden* (for which he also staged the fights), *Me and My Girl* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. He also taught a Sword and Shield SPT in Chicago. This fall, he began his second year of the MFA acting program at Western Illinois University, which has included teaching his own undergraduate movement class and SPT classes with fellow CT DC Wright.

CT/FD Robin McFarquhar just finished work on an all-male *Romeo and Juliet* at The Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C. At the beginning of the summer he worked on *Comedy of Errors* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre where he will choreograph *Macbeth* late in the fall. He will also work on *Hamlet* at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign where he is Professor of Theatre. He was nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award for Fight Choreography (the first time the Jeffs have had a specific category) for his work on *Cymbeline* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, his fellow nominees were CT/FD Nick Sandys and Kevin Asselin.

AAC Adam Noble recently played Edmund and choreographed the violence for *King Lear* at Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, then he travelled to NYC to take part in the Summer Sling 11 put on by Fights4! While in New

York, he served as Stunt Coordinator and Fight Choreographer for the independent short film *Deaf Killer*. This fall, Adam will choreograph the fights for *Macbeth* at Indiana Repertory Theatre, as well as *Marisol* and *Hamlet* at Indiana University.

Recent work for **CT/FD Nick Sandys** includes choreography for *Requiem for a Heavyweight* at Shattered Globe Theatre; *Falstaff* at Lyric Opera of Chicago; *Around the World in 80 Days* at Lookingglass Theatre (also performed); *The Ballad of Emmet Till* at The Goodman Theatre; and *Much Ado About Nothing* at First Folio Shakespeare Festival (also performed). He adds how "after performing and choreographing here in Chicago for 16 years, [I] finally got to perform a swordfight myself", playing Montano in *Othello* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, choreographed by Dr. Robin McFarquhar. He continues to teach classes at The Theatre School at DePaul University, which included two SPTs this spring; all but one student passed all the tests, with three passing in five weapons in May."

AC Steven Schwall reports a busy and successful summer of training, passing QS and SS at the Central Illinois Workshop, and UA, RD and BS at the NSCW East. His other projects this summer included Fight Choreographer for *Pirates of Penzance* at the Kindleberger Summer Festival, and teaching movement and stage combat at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. His current project is choreographing *Cyrano* at the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre.

In July, **Regional Rep. and CT Jim Stark** directed *The Last Five Years* for the South Carolina Repertory Company. He looks forward to directing *Three Sisters* at Hanover College this fall, where he continues to teach acting and stage combat.

AAC Drew Vidal recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with an MFA in Movement Pedagogy for the theatre, and is now an Assistant

Professor of Acting and Combat at Ball State University. This fall he will be working on the violence for *Violet* and *Camino Real*.

FM David Woolley is still teaching at Columbia College Chicago, now in his 22nd year; and is still going strong in his 19th year of doing *Dirk and Guido: the Swordsmen!* He will be staging at CCC *Landscape of the Body*, *Playboy of the Western World*, and playing Major General Stanley in *Pirates of Penzance*.

Mid America Region

Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota,
Missouri, Nebraska, North
Dakota, South Dakota



**By Mike
Speck**

MARegRep@said.org

CT Ian Borden has been very busy the last year, starting with the direction of *Cymbeline* for the Grand Valley Shakespeare Festival last fall. He subsequently performed as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and played the title role in *Macbeth* for Pigeon Creek Shakespeare. Ian also choreographed the fights for those plays, as well as for *As You Like It* and *Richard III*, also for Pigeon Creek. Away from the stage, he co-presented (with AC Hannah Gaff) a paper at the American Society for Theatre Research, "Translating Cultures: Bridging the Ancient and Modern through Trans-adaptation and Performance," and later had it published in *The Mercurian*. To finish off his year, he has left Michigan for a new job at the University of Nebraska, joining CTs Harris Smith and Paul Steger in the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film. Most of all, he would like to thank everyone for their support and good wishes since the death of his wife last summer – knowing your support was there made all the difference.

Regional Reports continued

Friend Todd Edwards recently attend the Central Illinois Stage Combat Workshop in Eureka, Ill. where he passed his SPTs in Single Sword and Quarterstaff. Todd, a designer and former actor, recently returned to the stage after more than twelve years in the role of the Host of the Garter in Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* with Shakespeare in the Park in Northfield, Minn. He also successfully completed the SAFFD Firearms safety course in Chicago this summer. Todd is currently working on the scenic designs for *The Aerodynamics of Accident* by Deborah Isobel Stein and *Spring Awakening* by Frank Wedekind. He is on the Design Faculty at St. Olaf College in Northfield Minn.

Friend Kurt Gerard Heinlein writes: "After 45 years as a successful non-Equity summer stock theatre, Tent Theatre (Springfield, Mo.) completed its first summer season as a LORT Company. The opening production of the season was Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, directed by Tony nominee Robert Westenberg and fight directed by Kurt Gerard Heinlein (FDC). Combat certified performers included David Long (SAFFD) as Cyrano, Lenny Hernandez (FDC) as Valvert, Darci Burch (FDC) as the Duenna and Fight Captain, and Adam Brietzke (FDC) as Le Bret. The production was met with sold out performances and critical acclaim."

So far in 2008 **Friend Karla Kash** has accepted a full time position at Drake University, directed and choreographed ...and the World Goes Round, fight-choreographed *Macbeth* and *Widow's Blind Date* at Drake. She will be directing *Urinetown* this fall as well as co-coordinating the first annual Carnage in the Corn combat workshop at Drake. Karla also directed and fight-choreographed *Jerry Springer: the Opera* this year at StageWest Theatre Company, and choreographed *Rocky Horror* at Western Illinois University and *Open Heart* (written by and starring Robby Benson) at the Stephen

Sondheim Center. Karla also recently became a member of SSDC.

Friend David Schneider recently choreographed and fought in a gothic ballet, *Hafengeist*, at the Minn. Fringe Festival. His choreography is also being used in a Minn. Renaissance Festival street fight.

AAC and Regional Rep. Mike Speck is getting his fill of workshops in 2008. He served as an intern at the Wonderland, the Beach BASH, and Central Illinois Stage Combat, where he finally got to test in (and pass) Rapier & Dagger for his 6th weapon! He is also co-coordinating a new workshop for the Mid-America Region, Carnage in the Corn, to be held the weekend before Thanksgiving at Drake University in Des Moines, IA. He spent the summer in his hometown of Winona, Minn. playing Froggy in *Foreigner* and the Voice of the Plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*, for which he also did the fight choreography, for Gilmore Creek Summer Theatre. Next, he's off to Monmouth, Maine to play Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*.

Rocky Mountain Region

Colorado, Idaho,
Montana, Utah,
Wyoming



By Jeff
Bull

RMRegRep@safd.org

AC Benaiah Anderson served as the Fight Captain for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival this summer. He will be Fight Directing for the Mizel Center Summer Theatre production of *Macbeth*, and the Theatreworks Production of *As You Like It*. He also continues to teach stage combat.

CT/FD and SAFFD President Geoffrey Kent recently directed *Grapes of Wrath* for Theatreworks, staged the violence for the regional premiere of *Les*

Miserables for the Arvada Center as well as *Noises Off* and *The Miracle Worker* for the Denver Center Theatre Company. This December he is taking his Equity card to play the disgruntled Crumpet in David Sedaris' one man show, *The Santaland Diaries* for the Foothill Theatre Company in California. In January he will appear in and stage the violence for *Richard III* for DCTC and *Macbeth* for the National Theatre Conservatory. This summer he returns to the Colorado Shakespeare Festival to play Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* as well as serve as Fight Director for the 2009 season.

AC and Cutting Edge Editor Michael Mueller became a father on July 10, 2008. He considers himself very lucky to have a son with such a pleasant disposition and a wonderful wife to share this joy with. In addition to this great event, Michael managed to squeeze in some time to visit CT Jonathan Cole to test in Broadsword and worked with the Idaho Shakespeare Festival in their productions of *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Macbeth*, and a touring production of *Hamlet*. The last few months have been spent in Cleveland, Ohio working with the Great Lakes Theatre Festival's remount of the *Macbeth* production from Idaho. He is very grateful for his wife, son, and two cat's patience with the ten-week relocation and cross-country journey.

AAC/CT David Rutherford was recently elected President of the Colorado Theatre Guild. He will be performing in *The Lying Kind* with Theatreworks in Colorado Springs in November and December.

NEW REPORTING SCHEDULE!

Check with your
Regional Reps.
for more info.

Upcoming Workshops



Drake University Department of Theatre and the Society of American Fight Directors
Present the Inaugural

CARNAGE IN THE CORN

STAGE COMBAT WORKSHOP
NOVEMBER 22 & 23, 2008
DRAKE UNIVERSITY DES MOINES, IA

PROPOSED CLASSES INCLUDE: Groin Shots are Funny; Sword vs. Spear; Fashions of Chan; Shaolin Staff; Gladiators of the English Stage; Duel vs. Ambush; plus many introductory classes in SAJD combat disciplines

CONFIRMED TEACHERS: Fight Master Mike Chin, Fight Director Michael "MJ" Johnson, Certified Teachers Ian Borden, Brian LeTraunik and DC Wright.

FULL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
General Registration: \$150
Drake/SAJD/Early Registration: \$125
Lecture Registration: \$40
Drake/SAJD/Early Lecture: \$35

SINGLE DAY REGISTRATION
General Registration: \$80
Drake/SAJD/Early Reg: \$70
Lecture Registration: \$25
Drake/SAJD/Early Lecture: \$20

Space is limited. Register today!

To receive the early registration discount, you must be paid in full by **October 20**.

Lecture registrants may only attend lecture/demonstration classes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION and to register, e-mail carnageinthecorn@yahoo.com

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The Fourteenth Annual

WINTER WONDERLAND WORKSHOP

January 16-18, 2009



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Upcoming Workshops and SAFD Information



STAGE COMBAT WORKSHOP

AT EUREKA COLLEGE
& WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

May 18 – June 5, 2009

Group and individual instruction with SPT's in
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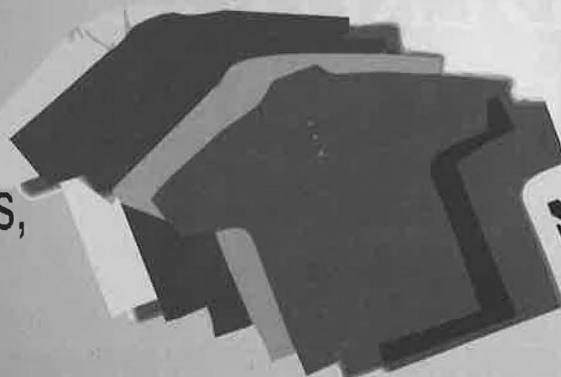
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2009 SAFD Membership Application/Annual Dues Form

Please complete the entire form. In order for the SAFD to maintain accurate records, it is important that all of your information in our database be current. You can mail your payment with this form, or you may pay online with a credit card at www.safd.org.

Reasons to join the SAFD:

- ☐ Subscription to **The Fight Master**, a journal published twice yearly
- ☐ Subscription to **The Cutting Edge**, our bimonthly online newsletter
- ☐ Access to back issues of both publications and online discussions in the members only section at www.safd.org
- ☐ Discounts to national and regional stage combat workshops
- ☐ The right to vote for members of the Executive Committee and Governing Body
- ☐ A free T-Shirt (Available to new and renewing members)
- ☐ And much, much more...

Status (Check one): ☐ New Member ☐ Current Renewing Member ☐ Lapsed Renewing Member ☐ Gift*

*If giving a membership as a gift, please print your name here _____

Please fill in the information for the gift receiver below.

Amount Enclosed (\$45.00/year USA, \$50.00/year Outside USA) \$ _____ **.00**

Payment Method (please check one): ☐ Paid online via Credit Card (please include copy of online receipt) ☐ Paid via enclosed Check Check # _____

General Information

Membership Level (please check one):

☐ Organization ☐ Friend ☐ Actor/Combatant ☐ Advanced Actor/Combatant ☐ Certified Teacher ☐ Fight Director

Name (First, MI, Last): _____

Home Address: _____

Work Address: _____

Materials should be mailed to (please check one):

☐ Home ☐ Work

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Union Affiliations (SAG, AEA, etc.): _____

T-Shirt Size (please check one):

☐ S ☐ M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ XXL

Please check the following:

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD sanctioned workshops: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding non-sanctioned workshops: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD classes in my area: ☐ YES ☐ NO

I would like to receive information regarding SAFD merchandise: ☐ YES ☐ NO

Current Skills Proficiency Test Results (Please list most recent SPT for each weapon)

WEAPON	Month/Year	Instructor	Adjudicator
Broadsword			
Knife			
Quarterstaff			
Rapier & Dagger			
Single Sword			
Smallsword			
Sword & Shield			
Unarmed			

Photocopy & Mail with payment or receipt to: **SAFD**, 1350 East Flamingo Road #25, Las Vegas, NV. 89119

Call for SAFD Historical Information

The Cutting Edge is seeking additional historical information on the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD). We are looking to update the website and establish a more concrete system of record keeping to preserve the legacy that was started by our founders (SAFD). We are looking for the following:

1. Photos from past SAFD events with captions
 - a. Please send photos as jpg, tif, or eps files
 - b. We accept black & white as well as color photos
 - c. 300 dpi is preferred, but contact us if you are having problems
 - d. Please include name of photographer, subjects' names and membership levels.
2. Lists of attendees for any and all SAFD sanctioned events
3. Detailed examples of how the SAFD has assisted you as an artist, an educator, and/or choreographer

Please send submissions and any questions to our email, cuttingedge@safd.org. This is a tremendous opportunity to share your favorite memories and inspire new generations of members. We hope that you will find the time to take advantage of this opportunity.

Definition

Thwart

Main Entry: **thwart**

Pronunciation: thwawrt

Function: *verb (used with object)*

1 : to oppose successfully; prevent from accomplishing a purpose

2 : to frustrate or baffle

Function: *noun*

3 : a seat across a boat, esp. one used by a rower

4 : a transverse member spreading the gunwales of a canoe or the like

Function: *adjective*

5 : passing or lying crosswise or across; cross; transverse

6 : perverse; obstinate

7 : adverse; unfavorable

Function: *preposition, adverb*

8 : across; athwart

SAFD Definition: A step that takes the body diagonally off-line to either the right or left, ending with the legs open.

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**Submissions for the March/April issue
are due January 1st!**



The Society of American Fight Directors
1350 East Flamingo Road
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www.safd.org

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